

FIRST UNIVERSITY DEGREES BY FIELD OF STUDY

Key Findings: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States

In science, mathematics, and engineering-related fields, the United States awarded the lowest percentage of first university degrees of all the G-8 countries.

In 2004, in all of the G-8 countries reporting data except Germany, a greater percentage of first university degrees were awarded in the combined field of social sciences, business, and law than in any other field (figure 18), with the highest percentage awarded in the United States (42 percent). In the United States, the percentage of first university degrees awarded in social sciences, business, and law was close to that awarded in the other major fields taken in total—arts and humanities; science, mathematics, and engineering; and education (44 percent).

In contrast, in science, mathematics, and engineering-related fields, the United States awarded the lowest percentage of first university degrees of all the G-8 countries. Whereas 17 percent of first university degrees in the United States were awarded in science, mathematics, and engineering-related fields, the percentages in the other G-8 countries ranged from 20 percent in Canada to 30 percent in Germany.

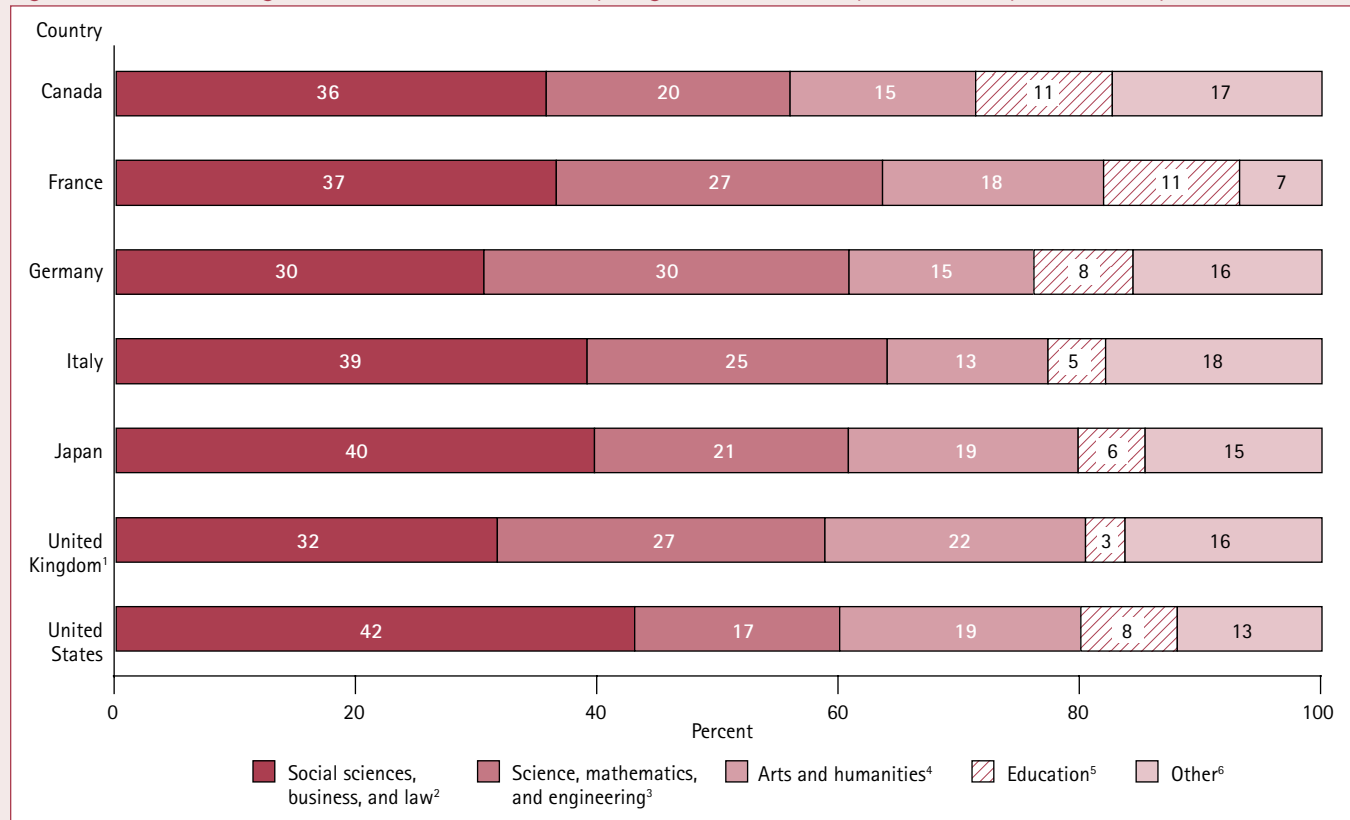
In arts and humanities and in education, the percentage of first university degrees awarded in the United States was within the range of degrees awarded in the other G-8 countries. In arts and humanities, the percentage of degrees awarded in the United States was 19 percent; in the other G-8 countries, the percentages ranged from 13 percent in Italy to 22 percent in the United Kingdom. In education, the percentage of degrees awarded in the United States was 8 percent; in the other G-8 countries, the percentages ranged from 3 percent in the United Kingdom to 11 percent in France and Canada.

Definitions and Methodology

Programs that prepare students for advanced research and highly qualified professions are classified as first university degree programs. First university degree programs vary in duration in different countries in different programs of study. In the United States, the first university degree corresponds to a bachelor's degree; it excludes associate's degrees.

The percentage of first university degrees awarded in each of the fields shown is the share of these degrees awarded in each field relative to all first university degrees awarded in all fields for a given year.

Figure 18. Percentage distribution of first university degrees awarded, by field of study and country: 2004



¹The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

²Includes social and behavioral sciences (ISCED 31), journalism and information (ISCED 32), business and administration (ISCED 34), and law (ISCED 38).

³Includes life sciences (ISCED 42), physical sciences (ISCED 44), mathematics and statistics (ISCED 46), computing (ISCED 48), engineering and engineering trades (ISCED 52), manufacturing and processing (ISCED 54), and architecture and building (ISCED 58).

⁴Includes arts (ISCED 21) and humanities (ISCED 22).

⁵Includes teacher training (ISCED 141) and education science (ISCED 142).

⁶Includes agriculture, forestry, and fishery (ISCED 62); veterinary (ISCED 64); health (ISCED 72); social services (ISCED 76); personal services (ISCED 81); transport services (ISCED 84); environmental protection (ISCED 85); security services (ISCED 86); and fields of study not known or unspecified.

NOTE: The fields of education shown follow the 1997 revision of the International Standard Classification of Education Major Field of Study (ISCED MFS) (UNESCO 1997). Programs that prepare students for advanced research and highly qualified professions are classified as first university degree programs, which correspond to ISCED level 5A. For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A in this report. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2006). Education Database. Retrieved October 26, 2006, from <http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/default.aspx?DatasetCode=RGRADSTY> and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, previously unpublished tabulations (February 2007).